

3.24 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources That Would Be Involved in the Proposed Project

3.24.1 Build Alternatives

The construction of the MCP project involves a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Land used in the construction of the proposed MCP project is considered an irreversible commitment during the time period that the land is used for the highway facility. However, if a greater need arises for use of the land or if the highway facility is no longer needed, the land can be converted to another use. There is no reason to believe such a conversion would ever be necessary or desirable for the foreseeable future.

Considerable amounts of fossil fuels, labor, public capital, and highway construction materials such as cement, aggregate, and bituminous material would be expended and not retrievable following construction of the MCP project. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources are used in the making of construction materials, and these are generally not retrievable. However, they are not in short supply, and their use would not have an adverse effect upon continued availability of these resources. Construction of the MCP project would also require a substantial one-time expenditure of both state and federal funds, which are not retrievable; savings in travel time and improved transportation system efficiency would offset this use of materials, labor, resources, and funds. In addition to the costs of construction and right of way would be the ongoing costs for roadway maintenance, including pavement, roadside litter/sweeping, signs and markers, electrical, and storm maintenance.

The commitment of these resources to the MCP project is based on the concept that residents, workers, travelers, and others in the immediate area, region, and state would benefit from the improved quality of the transportation system in western Riverside County. These benefits would consist of improved accessibility, travel time, and safety, which are expected to outweigh the commitment of these resources.

3.24.2 No Build Alternatives

The No Build Alternatives (Alternatives 1A and 1B) would not result in any irretrievable commitment of resources because Alternatives 1A and 1B would not result in the construction of the MCP project.

As stated previously in Chapter 2 of this EIR/EIS, Alternative 1A represents improvements made to the planned street network under the Riverside County General

Plan Circulation Element, except for future improvements to Ramona Expressway. Under Alternative 1A, the MCP project would not be constructed. Alternative 1B is the same as Alternative 1A, but includes the future improvements to Ramona Expressway. Because Alternatives 1A and 1B consider improvements to the planned street network consistent with the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element, there would be irretrievable commitments of resources resulting from these improvements, but not as a result of the MCP project.